

ABSTRACT

A method and rotary blancher for processing food product using a heat transfer medium and directed flows of a fluid that can comprise a liquid, a gas, a vapor or a combination thereof. The directed flows can be discharged from orifices or banks of orifices that are distributed around the food products in the blancher. The flows are discharged at a high flow rate, a high pressure, or a combination of both. Where a liquid is discharged, it preferably is discharged at a flow rate of at least 20 gpm and at least 30 psi. Where a gas is discharged, it is discharged at a flow rate of at least 60 CFM at a pressure of at least 2 psi or at a flow rate of at least 10 CFM at a pressure of at least 80 psi. If desired, discharged fluid can be recirculated to save energy. To help increase agitation and help break up clumps of food products in the blancher, direct-contact mechanical agitation devices, such as baffles, can be used. Such a blancher and method can be used to process food product by blanching, cooking and pasteurizing, is suited for processing relatively heavy food products having a density of at least 55 lbs/ft³ using discharged liquid and gas, and is suited for processing food products having a lesser density using only discharged gas.